

nflcp

Newsletter

National Federation of Local Cable Programmers

ATC and HBO Produce Live Conference Telecast Via Satellite

CVC Conference Opposes Rewrite

by Marilyn DeAngelis

Perhaps the two most visible accomplishments of the public access cable television movement this past year were the NFLCP convention in Madison, Wisconsin and the National Conference on Public Access Cable Television in San Diego, California, sponsored by Community Video Center (CVC). Both conferences focused nationwide attention on the triumphs and problems of community cable television.

The two conferences, though held little more than one month apart this past summer, complemented each other. While the Madison conference focused on building a strong national organization and grassroots base for public access, the San Diego conference was a philosophical meeting of the minds as well as the best opportunity thus far to attract nationwide respect and attention for cable television public access programming.

The following is an account of this meeting of the minds and the accomplishments of three days of contemplation, discussion and planning in San Diego.

The CVC conference was an access programmer's dream. Imagine 24-hour cable access programming right in your own hotel room and live satellite coverage in the nation's "first coast to coast public access program."

However, if awards were to be given out for "star of the show," a two-way tie would have to be called between former FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson and Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Communications.

The two were featured speakers and friendly foes—the latter defending his



Monitoring the VU meters on Friday Night Live, San Francisco Channel 25's alternative evening entertainment offering sponsored by a local ice cream merchant. NFLCP Newsletter goes west! See more Bay Area Video, page 4 and UCLA's Jacobson on Public Ownership of Cable, page 6. (Photo ©R. Davidson.)

rewrite of the 1934 Communications Act and the former attacking the rewrite and the established television industry.

According to Van Deerlin, "Cable television access is as difficult an issue as we've had to deal with.

"Even Nick Johnson says my mistakes are mistakes of the head and not the heart," he quipped.

Van Deerlin told the convention that the FCC's handling of cable television regulation was a classic example of regulatory overkill. He advocated complete deregulation, as written in his committee's proposed rewrite legislation.

Deregulation, said Van Deerlin, en-

courages reliance on the marketplace and eliminates unwarranted government regulations.

Nick Johnson's message was one familiar to access advocates. "We must have access if this form of government is to continue...there is no marketplace of ideas in mass media because the devotion is to merchandising," he said.

Van Deerlin's bill was a main topic of debate throughout the conference.

Screen Actors' President Kathleen Nolan asked for a complete wipeout of the bill.

"We want to take it from the top. I

(continued on page 18)

Letter From the Editors

Dear Readers,

It's time for the *NFLCP Newsletter* to move on. A new name and a new editorial committee will appear in the next issue. The NFLCP Board of Directors selected *Community Television Review* as the *Newsletter*'s name at their November, 1978 meeting in Ohio. And a group of people in Vermont, in consultation with Ann McIntosh has volunteered to continue publication of the *Newsletter*. This move has been endorsed by the BOD and will become effective with the next issue. Marilyn DeAngelis and Barry McQuilken, who along with McIntosh and Mike Aronson gave birth to the *Newsletter* two years ago, will be involved in other professional pursuits. They can be reached c/o the Video Workshop, P.O. Box A, Somerville, MA 02145.

East Meets West in this issue of the newsletter. *CTR* writers Marilyn DeAngelis and Barry McQuilken traveled to California in August to attend the National Public Access Conference in San Diego (see cover) and research access in that state. The result is our first West Coast issue, which includes an article by UCLA Professor Bob Jacobson advocating municipal ownership of cable television, DeAngelis' account of the conference, and McQuilken's look at San Francisco Bay area video.

Encouraging news on the Communications Act rewrite! Representative Lionel Van Deerlin (D-Calif.), chairman of the Communications Subcommittee and co-author of the first draft, was reported in *Broadcasting magazine* (October 2, 1978) as saying that the next rewrite *might establish a federal standard on the number of access channels cable systems should provide. But the number would be a minimum standard which states could augment.* In this issue we take a look at outgoing NFLCP Advocacy Chairperson David Hoke's testimony before the subcommittee.

Lastly, the NFLCP Newsletter Committee which is responsible for publishing *CTR*, is still seeking members. Contact us at Box 119, Cambridge, MA 02142, if you can help out by writing, selling ads, building subscriptions, etc. Members of the Newsletter Committee will meet to determine the future of *CTR* at the NFLCP Second Annual Conference in Austin, Texas, in June-July 1979.

Letters to the Editor

Dear People,

After reading the article in the September issue of the *NFLCP Newsletter*, "Access Best in U.S.," Says Stoney," I need to know where AMC is, and how to find out more about the cable intern program. Is it an ongoing thing and, if so, how does one get into it?

I also am very excited, after having been rather jaded, or simply depressed, with the state of the political art of cable.

Thank you,
Leigh Wood
6252 N. Pomona Road
Tucson, AZ 85704

Editor's Note:

Unfortunately, the AMC cable intern program, which funded cable programming interns at cable systems throughout the country, is no longer. However, the Alternate Media Center (AMC), which is run out of New York University, is alive and well and working on many new projects (see articles, "HEW Awards Major Grant to NYU

Telecommunications Project" and "New Master's Program in Telecommunications," in this issue). For fur-

ther information on the AMC, contact AMC, 144 Bleecker Street, New York, NY 10012, or call (212) 598-3338.

The *NFLCP Newsletter* is a publication of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. Newsletter Subscriptions, Memberships, and inquiries: Send to **NFLCP National Address**—P.O. Box 832, Dubuque, IA 52001. **NFLCP Newsletter editorial address**—P.O. Box 119, Cambridge, MA 02142.

Subscriptions come with membership: individual \$15/year, organization \$50/year, sponsor \$100 minimum/year; or can be obtained separately for \$7.50/year individuals or \$15/year for organizations.

Contents Copyright © 1978 by National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. Nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations may reprint items from the *NFLCP Newsletter* (with the exception of materials copyrighted by others), provided they credit the *NFLCP Newsletter* and notify us of the reprinting. All others must obtain advance permission.

The Editorial Committee established the following editorial policy which was accepted by the Steering Committee at its December, 1977 meeting:

The *NFLCP Newsletter* reserves the

right to cut articles due to lack of space. It will publish articles that 1) are of general interest to cable programmers and media access advocates and 2) are of specific interest to NFLCP membership.

The criteria upon which articles are judged to be included in the *NFLCP Newsletter* are clarity, accuracy, fairness to subject, timeliness, newsworthiness, overall organization, and degree to which the article is thorough and complete.

Editorial Collective: Marilyn DeAngelis, Ann McIntosh, Barry McQuilken.

Contributing Editors: Paige Amidon, Susan Bednarczyk, Marta Peck, Jean Rice.

Layout and Design: Barry McQuilken.

Contributors: Tom Dewitt, Carol Brown Eilber, Robert Jacobson, Phyllis Joffe, Ann Stonehocker.

Circulation and Subscription Manager: Susan Bednarczyk.

Special thanks to: Susan Siens and Page McLane (typesetting), Urban Planning Aid (layout room).

National Briefs

Public TV Breakthrough by Independents

Independents scored a huge success when President Carter recently approved legislation and guidelines stipulating that a "significant portion" of all programming funds must be allocated for work by independent producers. This is coupled with a request that agencies like the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities give at least twelve weeks' lead time in announcements of programming funds in the trade press to PBS affiliates and to independent associations.

New Board Chair for NFLCP

David O'Keefe was elected Chairperson of the NFLCP Board of Directors at the last Board meeting in Dayton, Ohio. O'Keefe succeeds Sallie Fischer, who resigned due to the demands of her job as General Manager of University Community Video, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Fischer will continue as Public Relations facilitator for the Federation.

Table of Contents

ARTICLES

San Diego Conference	1
Bay Area Video	4
Public Ownership of Cable	6

FEATURES

Letter from the Editors	2
Letters to the Editors	2
National Briefs	3
Uplink/Downlink	7
Access Profile:	
Portable Channel	8
Federation Trunkline	10
Community Education	11
Regional Reports	12
Info Matchup	23
Calendar	24

New Ethics Bill Passed

The new ethics bill passed by Congress now toughens many conflict-of-interest rules for government offices, including the FCC whose decisionmakers will be barred from all contact with the Commission for a year after their departure.

Equal Opportunity in Cable

The FCC has begun enforcing its Equal Employment Opportunity rules in the CATV industry. EEO policing work will be done by Cable TV Bureau staff members freed as a result of the elimination of the work formerly required by the certificate of compliance process.

New TV Study

A Corporation for Public Broadcasting study issued in November, "A Qualitative Study on the Effects of Television on People's Lives," says that commercial TV's success stems from widespread program promotion plus lack of intellectual stimulation. The study also said that people found watching public TV "hard work."

Queens to Get Cable

Knickerbocker Corporation, a division of American Television & Communications and soon to be merged with Time, Inc., will begin construction of a cable system to serve over 2,000,000 people in the Queens borough of New York City. The system will have four channels for educational, emergency, and municipal use and two for public access. These will be in addition to 13 broadcast channels, a paycable channel, a local origination channel, and 15 others.

\$180 Million Antitrust Suit Against Networks

Twenty independent video and filmmakers have filed a \$180 million lawsuit against the major TV networks for restraint of trade and monopolization of news and public affairs programming. The producers would like to see the end of network-produced/owned news and public affairs documentaries and magazine-format programs. They feel that these shows should be produced by independents and licensed to the networks for airing.

Possible Go-Ahead on ATC Buy

The FCC indicates that it will approve the purchase of American Television & Communications, Inc. by Time, Inc., which owns Home Box Office. ATC is the second-largest cable conglomerate in the U.S., and the FCC has studied the antitrust implications of the deal. Time, Inc. will pay \$140,000,000 for the purchase.

Nader to NCCB

Ralph Nader took over as Chairperson of the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting last month. Serving as NCCB's Executive Director is public interest attorney Samuel Simon. Nicholas Johnson will chair the National Citizens Communications Lobby (NCCL). NCCB now plans to republish its former publications *Access*, *Media Watch*, and *Citizens Media Directory*. Nader plans to speak about the subject of the consumer and the communications industry on various broadcast talk shows in the coming months.

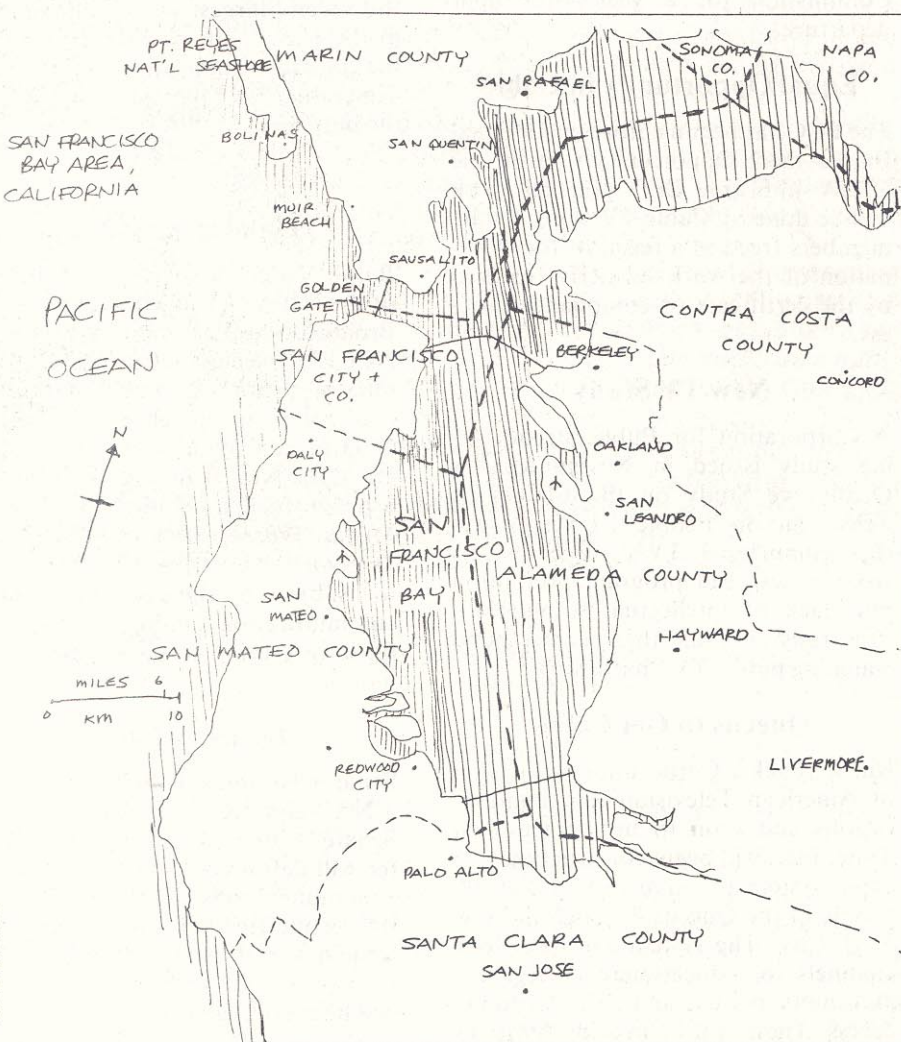
Industry Facelift

Senator Hollings (D-SC) announced at a NAB conference in Atlanta that the Senate Communications Subcommittee will definitely "renovate" the 1934 Communications Act in 1979, although the committee will not begin from scratch as did the rewrite effort in the House. Cable industry deregulation will be encouraged.

Long-Distance Signal Ruling

NCTA acclaimed a 4-1 FCC decision to require broadcasters to show cause why cable operators may not import distant signals as a "step forward for consumers." Prior to this decision, cable operators were required to prove that the broadcaster's market would not be harmed by adding a distant signal. Now the burden is shifted to local broadcasters during this interim phase of FCC study on the relationship between the cable and broadcasting industries. The decision means increased possibilities of distant signal carriage on cable systems, which could result in a squeeze on the time available for local cable programming.

Video Thrives in Bay Area East Meets West



Dick Fishman

by Barry McQuilken

(Following the National Public Access Conference in San Diego, Newsletter writer and native Bostonian Barry McQuilken visited several video/access organizations in a week-long trek up the California coast. The following is his report of San Francisco Bay area activities based on visits and more recent telephone interviews.)

San Francisco

Viacom Cable Company is the operator in San Francisco, the largest system in the Bay area. Tucked away behind the business office is a rudimen-

tary public access operation with studio well afloat with Geoffrey Leighton at the helm. Leighton, an employee of Viacom, said that only 16 percent of San Francisco has cable—but that's still 49,000 homes.

"This area is unique," said Leighton. "There are more cable access groups in a small area than anywhere else in the country—Community Media center in San Jose, Marin Community Video, Bay Area Video Coalition, PACT (in the Hayward-San Leandro area), to name a few."

Individuals from these groups and others have founded the Association for Community Television (ACTV), an ad hoc information and mutual sup-

port group for cable access programmers. ACTV's most vigorous campaign of late was its opposition to SB 1757 in California. SB 1757 was a cable industry-sponsored bill that would give cable operators new rights over municipalities. Governor Jerry (Edmond) Brown vetoed the bill which was also opposed by the NFLCP.

San Francisco access **Channel 25** is run on a fee basis (\$30 per hour for studio) while programmers can volunteer time to the channel (at \$3.00 per hour) in lieu of payment. "Any funds generated by fees help to defray the cost of operating the channel," said Leighton.

Having the access studio behind the cable offices may not be desirable to Viacom, according to one programmer.

"Viacom intimates that they would recognize one group to operate the access channel," reports Bob Brandonnelli, president of San Francisco Cable Access Corporation (SFCAC).

SFCAC was incorporated with that purpose in mind. However, there appears to be an Hispanic group that would like to run the channel as well.

The **Bay Area Video Coalition** (BAVC) is a major media center in San Francisco supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller Foundation. BACV recently completed a video needs assessment for the Bay area (an enormous document) and is now offering members broadcast quality field production and editing at ridiculously low rates: fully equipped Sony BVU editing at \$25 per day, Hitachi FP-1020 color camera with modified JVC 4400 three-quarter-inch deck at \$75 per day. BACV publishes the monthly *Networks* newsletter and has recently raised money to produce a six-part *Western Exposure* documentary series for public television in California.

The gay-oriented program, **Starlight Magazine**, may be the most ambitious cable project initiated by BACV members.

Says co-producer Jud Kohl, "When I first offered the idea of a high quality gay TV show, people didn't believe what I was talking about."

Starlight appears on the local origination channels in San Francisco and Oakland to a potential 65,000 homes. With advertising revenue, the program is "in the gray."



"We're paying our bills," Kohl says. Recent anti-gay decisions such as the Dade County ordinance inspired Kohl to produce the program. He said that he is interested in the possibility of satellite distribution for *Starlight*.

While there are groups producing for both access and local origination in San Francisco, another group, **Optic Nerve**, plays down the role of cable.

"As a rule there's nothing happening in cable," according to member John Rogers.

Optic Nerve is an independent, non-profit video production group in San Francisco responsible for producing the popular documentary, *Miss' California Beauty Pageant: 50 Wonderful Years* and *Pushed Up for Profit*, a documentary on housing speculation in California recently aired on public television. Their latest project is a documentary on Eurocommunism in Italy.

Sharing space with Optic Nerve was Ant Farm, another independent San Francisco-based video production group. Ant Farm was set back by a fire at their space in August. The fire took, among other things, the masters of *Media Burn*, a classic 1975 28-second video production where a 1959 Cadillac Seville crashes through a wall of burning TV sets.

Oakland

The Piedmont Ave. News has been responsible for a lot of the programming on the access channel in Oakland, reports Piedmont Ave. member Fred Gillette. Though the channel can reach 16,000 or 18 percent of the homes in Oakland, the channel carries little pro-



Left, Dr. Clarence Muse, 89, has appeared in approximately 220 motion pictures and is a subject of one of the six Western Exposure programs produced at BAVC. Right, The Transcendental Meditation Show has their own volunteer crew. Expenses are covered by the TM organization. (Photo © R. Davidson.)

gramming.

"There's little support for access from the cable company (TelePromp-ter) who operates the access channel," explains Gillette.

According to former access coordinator Larry Kay, "TPT won't commit any resources (equipment or funding) to access.

"There is a history of TPT being screwed up with the community, leaving a bad taste in everyone's mouth in Oakland," said current access coordinator Ira Meltzer.

"People who want to do creative work go to San Francisco's channel 25 or to San Leandro," he added.

Matters are further complicated by a recent action of the city of Oakland to deregulate cable and reduce the franchise fee from 8 percent to three at the request of TPT.

"The city of Oakland lost \$2 million in taxes from the cable company due to Proposition 13, then they turn around and reduce the franchise fee," noted Meltzer.

However, two new developments may ease the access situation. A new

group, Oakland Public Access League (OPAL), has been formed to promote access in Oakland and a group called OCCUR (Oakland Citizens Committee for Urban Renewal) has recently been awarded a 20-person CETA grant to improve community communications in Oakland. The OCCUR CETA grant will fund a TV specialist, an electronic engineer and a host of community organizers. Meltzer says he is excited about the OCCUR grant, but points out that the public relations director of TPT is a board member of OCCUR.

"It could be a good thing," he said.

Marin County

Marin Community Video (MCV) is a model community video center. Ray Rodney, who was just *retiring* as director, outlined the MCV funding scheme, which is based on cash from the cable operator, equipment use fees, production fees, workshop fees, an annual auction, and fees for taping and editing Board of Supervisor meetings for cablecast. MCV does not have a

(continued on page 18)

Public Ownership of Cable Communications — Toward Real Public Access

by Robert E. Jacobson

The tube seems to have grown dim on cable television. Once hailed as an incredible "techno-fix" for our most fundamental, communication-based social problems, cable no longer appears to hold much promise as an alternative communication medium for America. Vast areas of the nation's rural heartlands remain beyond cable's reach. The majority of Americans living in our urban settlements will not receive cable service in the near future. In Columbus, Ohio, Warner Cable's Last Great Cable Experiment—the Qube system—faces imminent economic failure.

At conferences and informal gatherings one becomes increasingly aware of a creeping fatalism among media activists and government regulators: "If cable can't do it, the phone company can." Perhaps, but at what cost to our communities and their citizens in terms of further economic and political oppression at the hands of a top-to-bottom national communication monopoly?

If cable has indeed defaulted on its earlier promise, where can the blame be laid? More importantly, can that potential be resurrected from the ruins of former, more ambitious (some would say grandiose) plans? Part of the problem, of course, lies in the fact that the United States has no adequate public mechanism for the making of communication policy. Those legislators and regulators not in the pockets of one or another communication monopolist are apparently unable to come to terms with the magnitude of the communication-policy void. So our policies are made in boardrooms and courtrooms—two places where the American public is seldom seen or heard. In the case of cable communications, despite the mutterings of apologists who see broadcasters and an occasional vigorous regulator as the Devil incarnate, the demise of "the wired nation" is the responsibility of the cable industry.

It is absolutely essential that critics and activists begin making a clearer distinction between cable-the-technology and cable-the-industry. Failure of cable-the-industry to serve any visible public interest should not lead to final disillusion with cable-the-technology.

In California, the most extensively-cabled state, penetration is a disappointing 21 percent of the state's households. Most systems serving California's 1.5 million subscribers still offer only basic 12-channel service. Where an additional service is available, it usually consists of pay-movies and other luxury goods. In a handful of cities, public-access programmers and cable operators share an uneasy peace, with public access relegated to Channel X or Y on the converter box (cost: \$2.00 a month extra, hardly an economic incentive to tune in). Where public access offers even meager competition with the operators' own pay-movies, attempts have been made to squeeze public access off the cable entirely.

It is not surprising at all to discover that most of California's "local" cable operators are merely corporate subsidiaries of vast multi-state and multinational conglomerates, for whom the bottom line is a vicious master. Nearly three-quarters of California's subscribers are served by out-of-state corporations. Only 8 percent are served by local, in-town entrepreneurs. There must be some correlation between this particular industry structure, becoming more common around the country, and the existence of cable as a luxury item for high-income suburban dwellers.

With their noses drawn to the scent of quick returns, the cable industrialists have learned to cater to the well-to-do, dismissing with vapid economic arguments the possibility that cable-the-technology might be something more than it is. (Congressman Van Deerlin: this is "market forces" in effect.)

That is why I advocate public ownership of cable-television systems. If

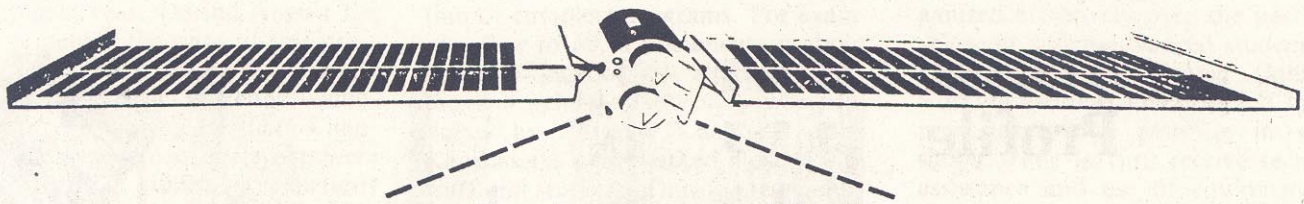
cable-the-technology is going to fulfill its promise, it will have to become a publicly-owned and publicly-operated utility. Specifically, I advocate public ownership for three reasons, ranging from the pragmatic to the ideological—realizing all along that there are some hard political fights ahead if these reasons are to lead to a new reality.

Pragmatically, cable in private hands is a loser. Whatever societal resources have been and continue to be expended toward its survival, the cable industry offers little in return to the vast majority of Americans. Federal regulation of cable has only existed on paper (before its dissection began), but the heat generated in Washington in meaningless efforts at "policy formation" certainly consumed more tax dollars than it was worth. Even at the local level, the meager resources most cities can devote to cable regulation inevitably benefit only the cable-serviced suburban fringe. And whatever capital has been invested in cable development, new services and wider distribution have not been forthcoming.

Cable, in private hands, will not respond to the public needs or interests of most Americans. If it continues on its present private-enterprise course, it will remain a peripheral attachment to the broadcasting and movie industries and, eventually, be subsumed by the phone system.

Another, more positive reason for supporting public ownership of cable is the expectation that a working, city- or countrywide cable-communications system could do much to revitalize urban commercial and public life. Historically, no cable operator has had the will or the means to completely wire a client city. But two dozen American cities and towns have already accomplished this goal using public monies, and another two dozen more are in the planning stage. Some of these are large cities. And in Europe, where state responsibility for the communicative well-being of citizens is not regarded as

(continued on page 22)



Uplink/Downlink

by Paige Amidon

Public Service Satellite Consortium Conference

The Public Service Satellite Consortium (PSSC) held its Third Annual conference in Washington, D.C. in October.

Featured industry speakers included Anthony Calio, NASA; Joseph Fogarty, FCC Commissioner; and Henry Geller, of National Telecommunications and Information (NTIA).

One of the most important announcements of the conference came from Calio of NASA, who announced that NASA will shut down their experimental communications satellites, CTS and ATS-6, as of June 30 and September 30, 1979, respectively. Thus the only satellites available for use by the non-profit sector will be the commercial carriers. Calio also announced that NASA would make PSSC the primary organization in coordinating terrestrial facilities for public service use.

In response to this, PSSC stated that they will be setting up the National Satellite Network, to aggregate users, to enable them to purchase time at bulk rates on commercial satellites.

Henry Geller, NTIA administrator, announced that NTIA will assist in market aggregation, technology transfer and the possible development of domestic and international public satellite services.

Public Service Satellite Communications Act of 1978 (HR 14046)

Mr. Ottinger (for himself, New York; Mr. Rose, North Carolina; and Mr. Fuqua, Florida) introduced the Public Service Satellite Communications Act of 1978 before Congress, September 11, 1978. This Act would provide for a research, development and demonstration program to establish an experimental public service satellite communications system.

The first paragraph of the bill describes its intent.

"It is in the public interest to encourage the planning and development of noncommercial communications satellite services in such areas as health care delivery, education, search and rescue, electronic mail, teleconferencing, and environmental data collection, which cannot presently be made available at affordable cost by technology now being used by common carriers for producing conventional telephone and television services."

If passed, the bill would appropriate money for fiscal year 1980. Funds would be used to explore new communications technologies and the judicious use of scarce natural resources, allowing for the development of an affordable noncommercial communications satellite system to be used by non-profit public interest groups.

London, Ontario Cable System Utilizes Fiber Optics and Digital Video

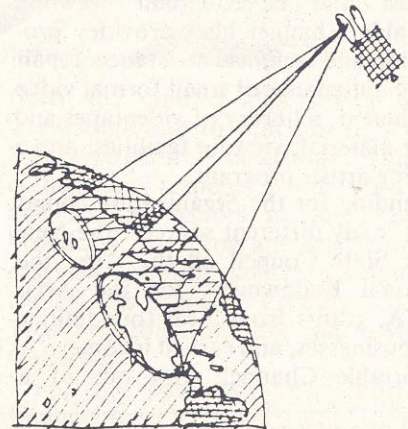
Canadian Cablesystems, Ltd., of London, Ontario, Canada, is the first system anywhere to utilize optical fiber and digital television transmission together. The results are spectacular—wide bandwidth (322 megabits per second on each fiber of a multifiber cable) and total immunity to signal degradation over long distances along the cable.

The optical system provides the very large bandwidth needed for digital television transmission and the digital encoding allows for insensitivity to cable length, opening the prospect of high quality picture transmission over 300 miles. The Canadians are eager to field test optical fiber as a means of getting high quality signals over long distances at reasonable costs because they want to provide broadband services to sparsely populated areas in their vast country.

The new super-trunk is designed to carry downstream 12 color video channels; 12 FM stereo channels (since London has poor over-the-air FM service);

plus data channels and "housekeeping" bits; and three video channels upstream. The upstream video channels anticipate the development of two-way service which is inscribed in the cable companies' plans for the future. Two spare fibers were built in allowing for channel expansion at a later date.

This \$1.6 million venture is being underwritten by a consortium of Canadian firms, including five cable TV operators and the manufacturer, Canadian Wire and Cable. The project demonstrates the tremendous potential ability the cable industry has to bring about major advances in technology by cooperating.



Footprints

(The area on the earth within which a satellite's signal can be received)

Some significant happenings in the Telecommunications Field:

EEO Policing: The FCC has begun a new effort to enforce its equal employment opportunity rules in cable TV industry. Staff was made available for EEO policing work as a result of elimination of certification of compliance process. Contact the Cable Television Bureau if you have questions or complaints.

(continued on page 21)

Access Profile

Portable Channel: A Community and Documentary Video Center

by Ann Stonehocker

In contrast to many other video groups associated with the NFLCP, Portable Channel has existed for many years in a pre-cable situation, with an emphasis on production for broadcast rather than cablecast.

Located in Rochester, New York, the non-profit community and documentary video center offers an integrated program of services to video artists; cultural, social and educational organizations; and artists in other mediums, both locally and nationally. These services include equipment access, programming for broadcast, cablecast and closed-circuit viewing. Portable Channel also provides production and technical assistance, repair and maintenance of small format video equipment, a library of videotapes and print material, viewing facilities, and a visiting artists program.

Funding for the organization comes from many different sources: the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, CETA, grants from local foundations and businesses, and earned income.

Portable Channel grew out of a

Portable Channel's purpose is "to make television more creative, diverse, human and personal, and to continue the successful integration of art, media and community."

grant awarded by the New York State Council on the Arts to the Rochester Museum and Science Center in June, 1971, to fund a media equipment pool. After it became apparent that access to video equipment without education or program models was meaningless, Portable Channel became an independent video center in 1972. That year saw the beginning of Portable Channel's workshops and production services as well as a continuing relationship with the WXXI-TV, the local PBS affiliate. According to Portable Channel spokespeople, this was the first example in the



Atkinson School student learns from Portable Channel Producer John Kavanaugh. Next Page, Portable Channel Producer Nancy Rossin demonstrates Sony 3450 camera in the field, and independent artist Carvin Eison utilizes twin Sony 8650 editing system at Portable Channel. (Photos by Patricia Ambrogi.)

country of cooperation between a video group using small format video equipment and a local broadcast station.

Since 1972 over 30 programs have been broadcast on WXXI-TV. The group is now planning a new series of productions to be broadcast later this year. These 30 programs are significant because a wide range of people are involved, including Portable Channel staff, students, interns, and community organizations as well as associate artists. Program topics range from documentaries on positive images of

A recent viewing of videotapes made by Portable Channel's producers held at the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester attracted an enthusiastic audience of over 280 people, which demonstrates the group's visibility in the community.

A regular series of viewings called *Window* was initiated last year in response to local producers' needs. Videotapes in rough edit stages as well as completed pieces are viewed for feedback with tapes produced by both locally- and nationally-known artists.

Since the development of cable in the area, Portable Channel has been active in creating an awareness of the potential use of cable access; through representation on cable advisory committees and at public hearings; and through assistance to local community organizations in the production of programs for public access. This past fall Portable Channel's first program specifically produced for cablecast was shown on the public access channel in the five cabled towns of Monroe County. This was the first in a series of programs to be made available to People's Cable Company, and included selections from the videotape library and new productions.

Portable Channel has also designed a video "road show" which will travel to different cable stations around the

the handicapped and women's issues to experimental video pieces and artists' personal explorations of the medium. (A catalogue describing these programs is available upon request.)

These programs now form part of Portable Channel's library of over 800 videotapes and extensive print material. Videotapes are exhibited locally at free public viewings such as art galleries and colleges, and are also requested nationally by libraries, video centers, cable stations, colleges and by private individuals.

country next year. During August the group presented the pilot of this project on New York Cable Television's public access channel in Pennsylvania. Examples of work by Portable Channel producers and associate artists were shown with live studio introductions and interviews taped earlier in the day on the streets of York.

A major commitment of Portable Channel has been to provide reliable, high quality production and post-production equipment, at the lowest possible cost. Non-profit organizations can rent equipment at a subsidized, non-commercial rate. For individual video-

makers free short-term loans of equipment and technical assistance are available. Due to limited funding, Portable Channel has traditionally worked with half-inch, black-and-white video equipment. However, the group recently purchased some color and three-quarter inch equipment and has been concentrating on upgrading the two editing rooms to better service the variety of requests received.

With access to Portable Channel's equipment and an equipment grant awarded by WXXI-TV, Portable Channel videomaker, David Rose, recently produced a program, *Available Light*, in cooperation with two local artists, Don Schimizzi and Stanley Duke. The color videotape which is based on excerpts from a psychic reading and is interpreted by local musicians, poets and dancers, was originally broadcast on WXXI-TV in June and will be cablecast on Manhattan Cable Television later this fall.



For those with limited video skills Portable Channel provides production consultation and assistance ranging from the production of short public service announcements to the produc-

tion of complete programs. For example, *Free to Be*, a documentary about Atkinson School, an alternative elementary school in the City was produced by Portable Channel's John Kavanaugh, who worked closely with staff and students. During the production the children developed skills in the use of equipment.

Another successful project was organized with The Center for Youth Services and the Gates Recreation Department. It offered young people an opportunity to explore and develop their self-awareness and potential and to produce a videotaped program from a

youth perspective. Ten high school students were involved (with John Helmore of Portable Channel) in the planning, writing and production of the completed program. *New Kid in Town* deals with such issues as peer pressure and prejudice through a fictional format. This program has subsequently been shown by the students and The Center to promote greater understanding between parents and students.

The success of Portable Channel's education program can be witnessed by the many staff and associate artists of Portable Channel, whose initial enthusiasm for video was encouraged through our workshops and internship program. Following the philosophy of "hands-on" use of equipment, the eight-week workshops are kept small, so that each student in the basic production workshop can have use of a portapack system one day a week. Similarly, students of the editing workshop are encouraged to use the editing facilities four hours a week. In addition, custom workshops are provided to suit the specific needs of organizations and individuals.

An internship program has been or-

ganized effectively over the past four years, in which advanced students acquire more sophisticated skills by working as crew on Portable Channel productions and assisting in workshops. They in turn receive technical assistance and use of equipment for their own personal projects.

As an intern Nancy Rosin produced *Women/Ministers*, a production which took over 18 months to make, during which time Nancy combined videotaping with housepainting to "keep alive." The documentary focuses on the Rev. Merrill Bittner, an "irregularly" ordained Episcopalian priest. It re-

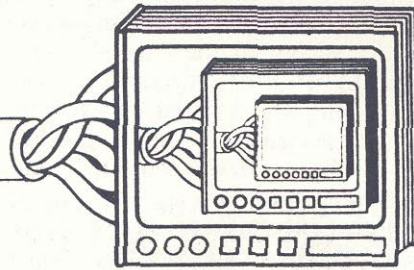


flects the conflict that arises when women attempt to function fully in a highly structured institution. Due to enthusiastic response from both lay and secular sectors to the original broadcast, the program was rebroadcast two months later. In addition, Nancy was named "Producer of the Year" by the Rochester Black Media Coalition.

For the past two years Portable Channel has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support a Visiting Artists Program. Each year four videomakers have been invited for two-week residencies to work on their own projects, to assist students, interns and staff in editing their own videotapes and to demonstrate the use of the medium at workshops and public hearings. Video artists have included Maxi Cohen, Nick DeMartino, Stephen Kulczycki from University Community Video in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Bob Burns and John Rogers of Optic Nerve, San Francisco; also Steven Kolpan, Gary Hill and Nancy Cain.

Federation Trunkline

by Susan Bednarczyk



Is it a Northeast exodus? . . . *Sallie Fischer*, formerly of STAND, Inc. in Derby, Connecticut, is the new General Manager of University Community Video in Minneapolis. Sallie replaces *Stephen Kulczycki*, who has gone on to work at KTCA-TV's programming department, the PBS affiliate in the Twin Cities. . . . Another addition to UCV from back East is *Kathy Seltzer*, formerly of Portable Channel in Rochester and currently the UCV's Equipment Manager. Kathy replaces *Ellen Hyker*, who is now a video producer in private industry. . . . *Jay April* and *Kate Deere* have also moved from Connecticut. Jay's recently taken on a position with the *Miami Valley Cable TV Council* in Ohio as an access coordinator under the direction of *Sue Buske*. . . . Also moving from Naugatuck Valley is *Harriet Moss*, former STAND video coordinator who is linking up with *Maurice Jacobson* and *Kim Spencer* in Washington, D.C. to assist in their video production companies.

So who's moving to the Northeast? . . . Perhaps stemming the tide is the recent return of *Tom Borrup*, who is on his way home to Vermont after coordinating the August 1978 San Diego Public Access Conference. . . . Also welcomed to Derby is the new coordinator of STAND, Inc., *Marianne Coccini*, formerly of Electronic Arts Intermix in New York. . . . Added momentum for the NE is new coordinator *Robin Stahl* of Schenectady. Good luck to everyone!

Hotbeds of activity . . . *Carolyn Perkins*, a staff member of the California Public Broadcasting Commission in Sacramento, is initiating a strong membership campaign for NFLCP as part of her duties as the new Far West Regional Coordinator. . . . *University Community Video* is just one of the community media groups in the Twin Cities. Others are KFAI-FM, a new community radio station, and Film in the Cities, a film/photography access center. . . . *Prim Oliver* of Schenectady

Cable Vision says that the access channel has about 25 hours of video programming weekly, but this number of cable hours will be boosted to approximately 60 when audio programming is added in the near future. . . . NFLCP Board member *Manuel Gonzalez* recently took over as access coordinator in *Fresno*. . . . STAND, Inc. must be doing something right, since NFLCP's National Chairperson *Sallie Fischer* and NFCB's National Chairperson *Bruce Theriault* were former staff members. . . . *Chuck Sherwood* and *John Sandifer* got hefty coverage of Manhattan Municipal Cable Channel L in October *Videography* magazine, which even featured the smiling pair seated in front of an NFLCP poster! For the latest in municipal use of cable, this is a key spot to watch!

Everyone's talking about . . . *Kim Spencer's* documentary on the Equal Rights Amendment shown on PBS systems recently. . . . The great publicity done by the *Far West Region* for their November "Do-It-Yourself TV Conference" in Santa Barbara. . . . *George Stoney's* film on the nature of documentary "How the Myth Was Made," scheduled to be shown in tandem with "Man of Aran" on PBS in January. . . . The two new regional newsletters being circulated to members in the Northeast and Far West. . . . University of Wisconsin Communications Program seminars planned by *Carol Brown Eilber* on subjects such as funding for media projects and copyright procedures for non-print media. As an added incentive to earning credits from these programs, individuals from across the state can participate live in the sessions over the Educational Telephone Network in every county, even if they can't make it to Madison. . . . The possibility of *Austin Community TV* and the folks in that part of the country hosting the Second Annual NFLCP Convention next summer. What a great idea!!

Highlights of the Fall NFLCP Board Meeting

by Carol Brown Eilber

The Board of Directors elected David O'Keefe of Rome, Georgia, to be Chairperson of the NFLCP at the November Board meeting in Centerville, Ohio, and accepted with regret the resignation of Sallie Fischer. Fischer will continue to serve on the Board in her new capacity of Public Relations Coordinator.

In other actions, the Board formally accepted Don Smith as Regional Development Coordinator and Tom Borrup as Chairperson of the Fundraising Committee. Bob Vitale will serve as Acting Chairperson of the Advocacy Committee until the committee election.

Austin, Texas, was approved as the location for the second annual convention next July. Sallie Fischer, Carol Brown Eilber, and David O'Keefe will meet with convention planners in Austin in December to provide Board input into the planning.

The Community Education Committee reported to the Board that it would sponsor the Educational Uses of Cable TV Conference that was held in Madison, Wisconsin last fall.

In two days of intense activity the Board concentrated on developing further procedures and policies for Fundraising, Regional Development, Advocacy, Community Education, and the Newsletter.

The results of the next Board meeting, scheduled for January 27-28 in Washington, D.C., will be reported in the next *Newsletter*.

Community Education

NE Computer Poll Results

by Jean Rice

Ninety people attended the Northeast Regional Conference last fall. Conference planners thought that this would be an excellent time to survey the membership about the programming they do. With Tom DeWitt at the helm, those attending the business meeting filled out a 50-question survey that was prepared by the Community Education Committee. Thanks to a computer-based polling system, we were able to tabulate the results of the 43 respondents with ease. The results give us a good profile of the activities and funding sources of local programmers from the northeast.

The sample consists of: one librarian; eight educators; six independent access producers; twelve access center staff members; seven cable commission or committee representatives; one cable operator; two city representatives; nine agency representatives; five members of public interest groups; and nine video artists. Of those representing organizations, seven are from ad hoc groups, sixteen from nonprofit, tax-exempt corporations, five from profit-making corporations, nine from departments of institutions, and three from committees of municipalities. The group itself was half female and half male.*

Nineteen of the programmers cablecast programs to between 21,000 and 25,000 homes. Nine of the respondents are served by systems with fewer than 12,000 subscribers and 12 are served by systems with over 12,000 subscribers. The majority, 23, use the public access channel, while two use government access, six use educational access, eleven use a composite access channel, and one uses a leased channel. Aside from cable, programmers utilized the following outlets: seven use PBS, seven use commercial TV, five use cable radio, five use broadcast radio, and fourteen use closed circuit showings.

Only ten people indicated that their local franchises contain access provisions. [Editor's Note: In light of the Midwest Video decision and potential deregulation on the federal level it is important for local programmers to

consider having their franchises amended to include channel allocation and financial support. Access provisions can be included in franchises at the initial stage and at rate increase, amendment, and renewal times.]

Programmers in the Northeast produce a substantial amount of programming. When asked how many hours of programming they produce each week, thirteen respondents said one hour per week, eleven said two to five hours, one said six to ten hours, six said eleven to twenty hours, and two said more than twenty hours per week. The formats used by the majority of programmers are half-inch and three-quarter inch. Interestingly, one-half use time base correctors. A wide variety of programs are produced, including public affairs, sports, children's event coverage, women's shows, and educational shows. The majority of organizations had between one and three people working full time on developing, producing, or facilitating programming.

A variety of methods for publicizing programs is used, with most people utilizing newspapers and announcements on the channel. One-third of the respondents used the following methods: Newsletter, civic association meetings and newsletters, T.V. and radio, flyers, and posters. Only two people used bill stuffers and only one person used school bulletins. The response to this question indicates access users' ever-growing awareness that publicity is a necessary ingredient in building an audience.

The financial support for programming produced by these individuals and organizations differs. Fifteen have a yearly budget of between nothing and \$1,000; ten have budgets of \$1,000-10,000; two have budgets of \$10,000-25,000; seven have budgets of \$25,000-60,000; and five have budgets of over \$60,000.

The major sources of funding respondents have are membership and training fees, donations, cable company support, and CETA and VISTA. Secondary support comes from cities, state foundation grants, local busi-

nesses, local fundraisers and contracts for specific programs. A few respondents receive financial assistance from schools, libraries and the United Way. Only three respondents received a portion of the franchise fee.

Respondents who utilize public access centers were asked who operates the facilities. Six said nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations, five said schools and colleges, four said libraries, five said a community group and nine said cable operators. This indicates the diversity of location and funding for access centers in the Northeast.

At the fourteen access centers represented, individuals produced one to five hours of programming per week. In four centers, six to ten hours was produced, and in six centers, eleven to twenty hours was produced. Organizations produced roughly the same amount. Civic organizations, school and college groups, youth organizations and political groups were identified as the groups producing programming in most of the centers. Library and women's groups produced programming in only six centers. All of the centers offered training classes for the public. Two centers train one to fifty people each year; four centers train 51-100 people; two centers train 101-200 people; and three centers train 200-400 people. Two-thirds of the centers provided over six hours of training per class.

The survey results also present us with a profile of each of the respondents. Following is a glimpse of some of the access activities of our fellow members.

Dorothy Steinberg is an independent producer from New York City who works with the Tarbuth Foundation. Dorothy produces two to five hours of programming a week which she shows on both a public and leased access channel to over 50,000 homes. She has been producing programs for over six years.

Nancy Bicknell is the program director from Dover, New Hampshire.

The Dover center, sponsored by the cable company, is located in the local high school. The center has been operating for four to five years. This year individuals produce between 11 and 20 hours per week and organizations produce from six to ten hours per week. Programming on the composite access

(continued on page 19)

REGIONAL REPORTS

Mid-Atlantic Region

Regional Coordinator:
Randy Feldman
P.O. Box 328
West Orange, NJ 07052
(201) 992-7710

Twenty people turned out for the fall conference of the Mid-Atlantic region at the Music Pier in Ocean City, New Jersey. Four were already NFLCP members and the other sixteen joined either as independents or organizations.

The morning session dealt with the possibility of putting public access programming on the RCA Americom Satellite. Alan Parinello, sales manager and former access producer, spoke about the project. Parinello proposed that the NFLCP consider and explore the possibility of putting community oriented programming on the bird. Funding would come from contributions from the MSO's and grants. Transmissions would be made during non-prime time hours on one of the transponders that are used by companies such as Home Box Office and Showtime. Parinello suggested that transmissions be during the afternoon, starting with five hours of programming per day. Cable systems with earth stations could cablecast the transmissions "live" or it record them for future use. Playback facilities would be made available at RCA's playback facility at Vernon Valley, New Jersey.

Mr. Parinello made it clear that he was not speaking to the group as a representative of RCA: "The accounts that I handle are long term contracts that may cost upwards of \$16 million. My proposed project would cost about \$250,000 per year. I am here today because I feel that you have thousands of hours of programming that the industry and their subscribers would be interested in. I am presenting a vehicle with which you could distribute them."

A detailed report of this proposal has been sent to the Board of Directors and will be printed in a future edition of the *Newsletter*.

The afternoon session concerned the Communications Act Rewrite. Paul Dizendorf, director of planning and development for the New Jersey Office of Cable Television, said that if the

Communications Act Rewrite was to be adopted as it is now written, public access may be regionalized on a statewide or regionwide access channel. Counties with more than one cable system may interconnect with each other and offer one channel for access. Dizendorf speculated that the Subcommittee would rewrite the Act to include access.

The Mid-Atlantic region also held an election for regional officers. The officers for the 1978-1979 year are: Randy Feldman, regional coordinator; Mickey Brandt, Board of Directors representative; Diana Peck, Community Education representative; and Berge Ayvazian, Advocacy Committee representative.

Members who have not sent in renewals for membership please do so as soon as possible.

Members who wish to have a copy of the regional membership list send self-addressed stamped envelope to above address (please note new address).

Far West Region

Regional Coordinator:
Carolyn Perkins
1622 1/2 H Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 446-0426 (evenings)

Members of the Far West Region gathered around poolside on the second day of the National Conference on Public Access Television in San Diego to elect new officers and begin planning for the coming year's activities. Carolyn Perkins, a graduate student in broadcasting at Stanford and intern on the California Public Broadcasting Commission, was elected regional coordinator. Paul Denn, director of Community Video Center in San Diego (CVC), was elected advocacy coordinator. Pat Williams, director of the Community Media Center in San Jose, was elected to a second term as community education coordinator. Also elected to a second term was Manuel Gonzalez, who will serve as regional representative to the National Steering Committee.

At the meeting several members from north of the California border announced they would form a new re-

gion. The Northwest Region will include Washington, Oregon, and Alaska. Our best wishes to Sky Kahli, the new acting coordinator and all the Northwest members. The Far West Region will now consist of Arizona, California, Hawaii and Nevada.

High on the list of the Far West's agenda are strengthening the communication lines among the membership and developing memberships through community outreach at the local, state and regional level. A monthly regional newsletter will be mailed to members and potential members as part of this effort.

Northeast Region

Regional Coordinator:
Robin Stahl
830 McClelland Avenue
Schenectady, NY

The National Convention last July brought growth and change to the Northeast Region. Many new members—involved in a broad spectrum of video activities—joined. Sallie Fischer stepped down as Regional Coordinator to become Chairperson of the NFLCP. *[She has since resigned that position after becoming general manager of University Community Video in Minneapolis, Minnesota—Ed. note.]*

More than ninety people turned out for the Regional Meeting last October in Albany. Guest speakers included William Henchy, CATV Division of Adams Russell, Inc., Jeffrey Forbes, executive director of the Massachusetts CATV Commission, and George Stoney, co-director, Alternate Media Center, New York City. All stressed the need for an immediate "push" for access at the local level. (See article this issue.)

Separate meetings were held, centered on such issues as tape exchange and distribution, increasing the availability and quality of technical services, and increasing cable users' knowledge of telecommunications outside of cable. An informal "steering committee" for the region was established—on a volunteer basis (all are welcome)—and that committee scheduled a meeting in late January.

Tom DeWitt arranged a computer video system for voting and polling the members via more than one hundred terminals throughout the building in

(continued on page 19)

Fourth Annual Conference Held in Cincinnati NFCB "Keeps It Going"

by Phyllis Joffe

"Keeping It Going" was the theme of the fourth Annual Conference of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB), held at the University of Cincinnati in August. At the opening session, on August 10, the 175 registrants heard Bruce Theriault, steering committee chair, and Tom Thomas, executive director, speak about the growth of NFCB and its many accomplishments during the past year.

NFCB began in 1975 as a membership organization of 18 community-based broadcast groups throughout the United States. It has since grown to include 49 member groups, nine organizational associates, and some 100 associate members. NFCB represents community stations at the national level before Congress and the FCC, provides liaison with national agencies, and offers a number of special services to aid local groups.

In addition, the NFCB Program Service, which was founded in 1975 as a cooperative program exchange among community-based public radio stations, now distributes a wide range of cultural and public affairs programs to radio stations, schools, and libraries throughout the country. These programs come from the current productions of the community stations, the work of independent producers, and the NFCB archives of over 3000 programs.

Following the opening remarks, Bill Thomas and Betsy Rubinstein, program service director and associate director, presented the first annual Program Service Awards to three member stations that had given outstanding support to the Program Service during the year.

The "Lots of Tapes" award, for the most number of tapes submitted to the program service, was given to KOPN, Columbia, Missouri; the "Tapes in Demand" award, for the most number of tapes ordered from one station, went to WYSO, Yellow Springs, Ohio;

and the "Golden Tape" award, for the single program that received the greatest number of orders, was presented to KAOS, Olympia, Washington, for "The Tell-Tale Heart," produced by Greg Falken.

Following the opening session, conference-goers attended workshops, panel discussions, and special interest group meetings. In addition, WAIF hosted an open house, which included a live broadcast on community radio.

Workshop topics centered on the areas of administration and program development, with several dealing specifically with FCC and CPB regulations and requirements. Jonathan David, of the FCC, was present to explain recent and proposed rule changes for noncommercial radio and to respond to the questions and concerns raised by these changes. Mike O'Connor, a graduate student at the School of Business Administration at Cornell University, gave a series of workshops on financial management, focusing on computers, planning, marketing strategy, and budgeting.

Several workshops were also given in the area of news gathering and reporting. Of particular interest were the "Issues in News Coverage" workshop, presented by Pacifica National News Bureau staffers, and the workshop on the New England Radio Alliance's coverage of the June 24, 1978 Seabrook, New Hampshire anti-nuclear demonstration, presented by Paul McIsaac, of Goddard College Community Media. Also of special interest was a well-attended workshop on women's programming and distribution, led by members of the Feminist Radio Network, Washington, D.C.

Panel discussions, which were sprinkled throughout the conference, focused on Management, Decision-making, Third World Employment, Public Policy for Public Broadcasting, and Perspectives on the Changing Role of Community Radio. In all, there was much to choose from, many new peo-

ple to meet, and lots to learn.

In addition to attending workshops and panel presentations, NFCB member delegates were conducting their annual business meeting. The meetings were scheduled to take place before the conference officially began, in order to avoid conflict with workshops. Delegates representing 31 member stations and participants were on hand to seat new participants, review the 1978-1979 budget, review operations of the Program Service and the NFCB in general, and to elect Steering Committee members and officers for the coming year.

The issue of how community broadcast television stations and cable radio stations fit into NFCB structure was one important issue discussed. A committee delegated to look into the matter came up with the resolution that, although NFCB is open to all media groups, the staff should continue to focus on radio broadcast entities. However, the committee and Nan Rubin, NFCB staff member in charge of Public Affairs and Program Development, expressed interest in the NFCB Steering Committee working closely with the NFLCP Board of Directors on this issue.

During the conference, the possibility of program interconnection among NFCB member stations was frequently raised and discussed. Tom Thomas, executive director, recommended that NFCB begin to look at program interconnections via satellite, microwave, etc., with strong emphasis on the programming aspect of the interconnect. At the "Blue Sky" brainstorm session on the last day, strong interest was expressed in networking. Steering Committee chair, Bruce Theriault, said this will be a major item for discussion during the next year.

For further information on NFCB, write to: NFCB National Office, 1000 11th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001; or NFCB Program Service, 1217 West Church Street, Champaign, IL 61820.

Legal Briefs

NFLCP Testifies in House

by Barry McQuilken

The NFLCP was invited to give testimony before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Communications relative to the first draft of the rewrite of the Communications Act. The following testimony was prepared and delivered by then NFLCP Advocacy Chairperson David Hoke on August 10, 1978 in Washington, D.C.

Also testifying that day were representatives of NCTA, CATA and the New York State Cable Commission. An impromptu question and answer and debate session between witnesses followed the prepared testimonies.

"About three or four of the Subcommittee's 16 or 17 members were present at any time of the day," reports Hoke.

Hoke has recently stepped down as Advocacy Chairperson. "Paige Amidon and Robert Vitale are currently picking up most of the slack," he said.

Hoke expects a rewrite of the rewrite to appear in the spring with a new set of hearings. Further testimony will be needed from the NFLCP.

"We've done a good job of making our position known to the subcommittee," said Hoke. "Now we need more emphasis on grassroots lobbying."

**Testimony given on August 10, 1978
by the National Federation of
Local Cable Programmers.
Delivered by David Hoke,
NFLCP Advocacy Committee
Chairperson.**

I. The NFLCP Background

The NFLCP is a non-profit organization consisting of individuals and organizations who utilize cable TV for community responsive TV or are in support of such programming. The NFLCP has membership in over 150 communities throughout the country. Organizational members include such groups as libraries, municipalities, schools, community video centers, churches, and social service agencies.

Services of this primarily volunteer operated organization include regional and national conferences; community

education, information and consultations; advocacy, and a newsletter/magazine featuring articles on community use of cable TV and related issues.

This NFLCP testimony is based on an advocacy platform which was ratified by delegates representing the membership at the NFLCP national convention in July of 1978.

II. Cable Access and the Public Interest

In the case of cable TV the public interest can in part be defined in the principles of freedom of speech and diversity of programming as well as localism and the decentralization of media.

Freedom of Speech: Access to cable TV is based on the principle of freedom of speech. In our society, telecommunications, particularly television, is the predominant medium for communications, and access to that medium is essential for freedom of speech to be a practical reality. Effective access to cable includes the freedom to determine the form of expression.

Diversity of Programming: Americans rely on television for information, entertainment, news, cultural experiences, and in general, a link to the world and community. In order to fully participate in our society, citizens need television programming that offers the widest range of experiences and services. Because some communications needs are unique to specific segments of our society, corresponding television "narrowcasting" is essential to fully realize the potential of the television medium.

Localism and the Decentralization of Media: In order that telecommunications serve the public interest fully, local communications needs must be met. Multi-faceted communities benefit by an interchange of ideas, information, services and experiences. This exchange is essential for a community that depends on active residents for its own vitality. The possibility of expanded and enlightened community communication has been ignored by mass (electronic) media and is being

achieved through cable programming.

Our experience since 1972 when the FCC first promulgated cable access requirements has been that these principles have been realized on a daily basis on cable systems throughout the United States. Literally thousands of American citizens have used cable TV access channels.

Libraries which face the challenge of finding their place in the electronic age of communications have utilized cable access channels as a vehicle for expanding its information dissemination services directly to the home.

Municipalities have used cable to bridge the gap between government and citizens resulting in a higher degree of citizen participation in the government decision making process.

Schools have utilized cable TV to expand the traditional classroom into the home. Other schools have utilized cable to involve students' parents in the educational process through PTA type programs.

Social service agencies have learned that cable TV can be used not only to inform the community about available services but to actually deliver many of those services through TV.

Non-English language programming has been available to citizens who would not otherwise have access to programming presented in their primary language.

Minority groups have utilized cable to promote their interests and goals. Women's groups, Blacks, and others have utilized the TV medium which would not otherwise be available.

Arts groups have utilized cable to bring a higher degree of visibility to local artists. In other cases poets, theatre groups, and video artists have used video/cable as an art medium in itself.

Neighborhood and community groups have utilized cable as both an organizing and advocacy tool in strengthening the cohesiveness of the community.

Cultural and ethnic groups have likewise used cable TV programming to communicate among themselves, preserving tradition and heritage and simultaneously educating the rest of the community.

The average citizen has used cable access to express views or to share an experience or event with the rest of the community. No other electronic communications are available to the citizen who wishes to make such a statement.

The goals of such uses are clearly in the public interest and are vital to the growth of our nation.

The Communications Act of 1978 would remove the "public interest" as a basis of federal actions and replace it with a "market place deficiency" trigger. While in the minds of the authors of the act the two may be synonymous, there are fundamental differences. In the case of the deficiency trigger, there is no criteria implied. Deficient in meeting what purpose? In the case of the "public interest" as a basis for federal actions, a purpose and a measure is established. The fact that there have been problems with interpretations in the past does not mean that we should abandon the principle. Instead, Congress should be challenged to play its role in clarification and oversight. In the case of cable we offer the principles of freedom of speech, diversity of programming, localism and the decentralization of media as clarifications of the public interest.

III. Market Place Deficiencies

The marketplace alone will not fully support the actualization of public interest principles on cable TV.

The cable industry as a whole believes that cable access programming does not contribute to the economic viability of the industry. This predominant attitude prevails despite the fact that local programming cablecast on cable access channels adds to the diversity of programming offered to subscribers. Even in many communities with a history of cable use which is recognized as being successful in meeting community communications needs by both the operator and the community, the operator continues to maintain that no significant economic benefit to the cable business has occurred.

Some of the more enlightened cable operators who are exceptions to this generality have actually used "community communications" as a marketing tool. These operators have sold cable subscriptions by offering programming services which are not available through the broadcast media.

While the NFLCP welcomes this phenomenon we do not believe that the marketplace alone will foster optimal programming diversity in all communities. Further examination of this marketing technique reveals deficiencies.

The technique is most economically effective in communities where high subscriber penetration would not be achieved by offering basic broadcast re-transmission services alone. Since cable is a monopoly in a given community there is no incentive to offer community communications services if a high subscriber penetration is achieved without it.

Even in communities where the operator needs community communications to build subscriber penetration, problems arise. Linking programming opportunities to the economic interest of the cable system creates an economic condition similar to broadcast TV but on a small scale. Community programming which contributes to economic growth of a cable business would be supported. Programming which doesn't would be stifled or eliminated. While we expect that many programs which serve the public would help the cable business, many wouldn't, hence economics would limit diversity.

Even at best we do not expect that many programs which are designed to be "narrowcast" to small segments of the community such as the deaf will have commercial benefit to the cable system. In these cases the size of the potential audience and hence the potential for additional subscribers will not serve as an incentive for operator interest.

As new commercial software is made available to cable operators the economic value of community communications will be threatened. We witnessed this when home box office began to flourish. Particularly on 12-channel systems, channel capacity available for community use was displaced in favor of the profitable or more profitable pay services. As new commercial software becomes available we can expect that the same return on investment principle will come into play even on the larger capacity systems.

IV. Cable TV Is Interstate Commerce

A. Cable TV is part of a "nationwide communications system" making it interstate commerce.

This system interfaces cable TV with satellites, microwave facilities and broadcast components of the system.

While at present cable TV is typically the last link of the system, plans are being made for cable to become the first link as well. The community video satellite project is seeking to interface cable TV facilities with an interactive nationwide satellite system. This would expand the interactive services already provided on cable systems similar to the Reading, Pennsylvania interactive senior citizens programming to a national scale. We can expect that two-way commercial applications will be developed as well.

B. The fact that cable TV acts as a monopoly warrants the protection of consumers.

We have pointed out that local cable programming is both in the national interest and that marketplace forces are deficient in promoting that programming. The federal government has a necessary role in protecting consumers when the public interest cannot be met by monopolies entrusted to serve the public.

The alternative to forward thinking legislation is anti-trust litigation. This alternative would place unfair and unnecessary burdens on a consumer who would need to expend a great deal of energy and personal monies to seek access from a cable monopoly which denied access.

C. The role of the federal government and hence the interstate nature of cable has been implicitly upheld by the Supreme Court.

In both the Southwest Video vs. FCC and Midwest Video (I) vs. FCC, the Supreme Court implicitly upheld the interstate nature of cable. In the case of Midwest (I) the Supreme Court upheld the FCC's authority to require cable operators to originate programming. More recently, Midwest (II) vs. FCC has threatened FCC cable access mandates. In that case, the 8th Circuit Court ruled that the FCC did not have jurisdiction based on the 1934 Communications Act. The court further raised constitutional questions provided that there were legislative bases.

The FCC has petitioned the Supreme Court for writ of certiorari in that case. The U.S. Justice Department has supported the FCC in the case on both the jurisdictional and constitutional questions.

(continued on page 20)

NYU Announces New MA in Interactive Telecommunications

by Barbara L. Bickerman

A Seattle doctor examines x-rays being transmitted from a hospital in Alaska. A Chicago-based business conference includes panelists located in five other cities, including London. The testimony of a key witness in Phoenix is carried live from the county jail to the courtroom. All of this is made possible by interactive telecommunications.

To meet the need for qualified professionals in this expanding field, New York University's School of the Arts has designed a Master of Professional Studies degree Program in Interactive Telecommunications to begin Fall 1979, according to David J. Oppenheim, dean of the School.

"This is a hands-on program, focused on people who will be out in the field trying to make things happen," says Dr. Martin C.J. Elton, chairman of the program. Former director of the Communications Studies Group at University College, London, Dr. Elton asserts that NYU is the first in the nation to offer a curriculum that combines the technical, theoretical and practical application of media used for interactive, rather than one-way, communication.

The two-year, 60-credit program, developed over the past three years

with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, has four areas of concentration. Students will be required to take a variety of *core courses* including a communications laboratory; the study of telecommunications as an industry and a science; psychological aspects of perception and communication; organizational theory, and the fundamentals of engineering. *Fieldwork* will provide a large part of the "hands-on" experience and will involve students in the media efforts of diverse concerns—from large corporations to small nonprofit public interest groups. Participants also will be required to develop in an *area of specialization* which may be augmented by graduate level courses in other schools of the University. *Seminars*, featuring experts, case studies and in-depth discussion, will serve to integrate the entire program.

"The field of interactive telecommunications is one of enormous potential," says Dr. Elton. "The technology is already proving of substantial value in business, education, law, medical care and social services delivery."

The Seattle doctor was viewing a "slow scan TV" that can project a different image every 30 seconds and is carried over normal telephone wires. The business panel was using an "audio conferencing" system that con-

nects individuals or groups in different parts of the country and overseas, with all participants able to speak and hear everything said. Slide projectors at each location can be controlled remotely and used for visual presentations during the meeting. The criminal justice program in Phoenix, Arizona utilizes a picture telephone network which includes sets placed in the public defender's office, the jail, the courthouse, the police crime laboratory and the probation office. And, in Reading, Pennsylvania, an experiment conducted by NYU's Alternate Media Center created a two-way cable TV system that serves and is operated by the senior citizens of that city.

NYU's Master of Professional Studies degree Program in Interactive Telecommunications, which will be limited to 20 students for Fall 1979, has been designed to take into consideration the needs of the working professional. Classes will be concentrated into one or two days during the week. Faculty will be drawn from the School of the Arts, its Alternate Media Center, the University at large and experts in the field.

For applications and further information, write: Dr. Martin C.J. Elton, director, Interactive Telecommunications Program, NYU School of the Arts, 144 Bleecker Street, New York, NY 10012 or call (212) 598-3338.

Goddard Offers Summer Community Media Program

Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont, will offer the fourth year of its Community Media Program June-August, 1979. The program is unique in the field, offering students an intensive 12-week opportunity to work with radio and video, developing media projects that meet the needs of people, not networks, and of community rather than commercial interests.

"The program offers several new opportunities this summer," according to Ann McIntosh, the Program Director. "WGDR, the college radio station, has applied to the FCC for a power increase from 10 to 800 watts. Our signal will blanket the Barre-Montpelier, Washington County area." The video program will also gain new emphasis. Students will have the option to work with Interact, a network of two-way video sites located at selected hospitals

and correctional facilities in Vermont, to explore and develop every aspect of using TV interactively between communities of specialized interest.

Techniques of making community documentaries will be learned in the field, with students working with the local Barre Ethnic Heritage Association. In addition, participants will collaborate with local artists and media outlets through the St. Johnsbury TV COOP, the Vermont Alternative Media Project, the New England Radio Alliance, and Image Coop.

Students will have a rare opportunity to collaborate with nationally known artists on a videotape to be produced locally. *Richard Leacock*, cinema verite pioneer of the 1960s and Professor of Film at MIT, *George Stoney*, co-director, NYU Alternate Media Center, and *Media Bus* (formerly Video-

freex) are among the scheduled participants.

Permanent faculty are *Ann McIntosh*, a freelance video artist who has taught at MIT and the University Film Study Center Summer Institute, who was a founder of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, and recently received grants from the NEA and the Massachusetts Art Council; and *Paul McIsaac*, director of special programming for WBAI-FM, Pacifica's listener-sponsored station in New York City. McIsaac is currently on the Goddard faculty and has directed the first three summers of the Community Media Program.

One semester academic credit and financial aid are available. For more information, write: Director, Community Media, Box M-12, Goddard College, Plainfield, VT 05667.

Panel Stresses Need for Access Push

by Susan Bednarczyk

Discussion at the Northeast NFLCP Fall Conference in Schenectady, New York outlined work that access users must tackle in the next two to three years if local cable programming is to be a long-term component within the industry.

William Henchy, CATV Division President of Adams Russell, Inc., advised concentrated action in the establishment of the local access concept before satellite program distribution eats up most of the time on now-blank channels. Henchy predicted and advocated cable industry deregulation soon. He said that programmers should begin now to convince operators that offering local shows can mean good business for them by encouraging added subscriber dollars. Henchy told the gathering that access which "pays for itself" and continued production of interesting local shows should be the goal for programmers in a new era of deregulation within the industry.

Panelist Prim Oliver of Schenectady Cable Vision noted that local program-

mers in her town are reaching this goal, although statistics are not available to prove it. Oliver confirmed that access programming boosts subscriber count, making it worthwhile for the local operator to continue to spend approximately 10¢ per subscriber per month on this service. However, she noted, that most of the success was due to the spirit of cooperation between the system operator and the community. Henchy agreed, saying that access has the best chance of taking hold in any community that is already organized with social and cultural institutions. He noted that cable operators cannot be responsible for community organizing.

Jeffrey Forbes, executive director of the Massachusetts CATV Commission, said the future of access is narrow.

According to Forbes, industry deregulation is very near. He predicted a "more feisty relationship locally" over franchise negotiations if the Supreme Court sustains the lower court decision in the Midwest Video case.

When questioned by George Stoney, Alternate Media Center co-director,

audience members confirmed Stoney's conviction that access and local programming on cable would not be as developed as it is today if it were not for Federal mandates. Stoney agreed with Henchy that programmers must do more to raise system subscriber levels and devise better methods of program promotion, but strongly urged maintenance of Federal standards in the future to "reserve channel space just as we reserved park land for the public in the 1880s."

Roni Lipton of the New York State Commission on Cable summarized the session's keynote. "The medium of abundance is becoming the medium of scarcity," she told the group. Lipton urged programmers to meet the challenge of local franchising by vigorously working with local cable operators and city governments immediately to make a case for sustenance of access in every community. Many audience members agreed that some Federal guidelines are necessary for access' survival in future franchises, and Lipton encouraged them to organize through NFLCP to meet this goal.

New \$ for Indies

The recent passage of the amended Telecommunications Financing Act, the funding bill for the Public Broadcasting System, marks a major breakthrough for the participation of independent film and videomakers in public television. The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), a national group based in New York City, spearheaded the writing of the amendments, as well as testimony before the House Subcommittee on Communications and other federal agencies.

The amendments were proposed by Robin Weber, director of AIVF's Media Awareness Project and east coast coordinator of the National Task Force on Public Broadcasting, and Larry Hall, west coast coordinator of the Task Force and chairperson of the Committee to Save KQED in San Francisco.

Particularly noteworthy are the provisions of the bill which stipulate that a

"significant portion" of all monies allocated to CPB by Congress must be spent on national and local programming *and* that a "substantial portion" of all programming funds must be specifically allocated for work produced by independent producers. The congressional committee report made it clear that by "independent," the bill does not mean established Hollywood producers, but rather, those "small" operators not affiliated with any station or institution and not yet nationally recognized.

AIVF's testimony began with Dee Halleck, president, who stressed the need to maintain and increase public involvement in communications. Halleck stated that independents can serve as the natural facilitators of public input. Other areas addressed were the need for continued regulation and access provisions for cable as well as

the need for allocation for public use of satellite capabilities. AIVF also expressed the belief that the formation of a public telecommunications programming endowment is a healthy step, if the endowment focuses primarily on programming and supports the notion of peer panels on all levels in public television, from endowment allocations to station broadcast. The closing statement was a request that the discussions on this rewrite and the future of public broadcasting be broadcast on public television.

Following the testimony, representatives of the committee (Robin Weber, Dee Halleck, Ralph Arlyck) met with the National Telecommunications Information Agency (NTIA), the White House Staff, the Federal Communications Commission, the AFL-CIO, the NEA, PBS, the Consumers Federation of America, the National Citizens Communications Lobby, and other concerned parties.

The CVC conference was an access programmer's dream.

(continued from page 1)

don't think there is any way of patching it up," said Nolan, a member of the Carnegie Commission on Public Broadcasting and a recent nominee to the board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Other featured speakers echoed this dissatisfaction with the current state of mass media.

Gene Youngblood, a communications researcher and writer, stated that centralized mass media is a threat to interpersonal communication. Kathy Bonk, chairperson of the National Media Committee of the National Organization of Women told the group that "access means power."

Father Barry Verdi, professor of community television at San Jose State College, also spoke on the issue of power. He recommends the establishment "once and for all, of a political base for access."

Verdi's call led to action. A committee of about 70 people met to discuss ways and means for political action. The result was a statement going on

record in opposition to the Van Deerlin bill H.R. 13015. The statement urged the importance of federal guarantees of public access to over-the-air broadcasting, as well as to cable television.

It stated that any new legislation "must afford these protections in adequate and comprehensive terms." It also called for the "public's right to access to all telecommunications technology on the basis that such a guarantee is a proper extension of First Amendment rights."

The other attractions at the three-day conference were many. A long list of speakers from around the country led panel discussions on current legal and legislative issues, as well as funding and programming sessions. A model cable access system brought 24-hour public access programming into each conference goer's room at the El Cortez Hotel. Many conference sessions were cablecast live, making it possible to catch a session or two on the run.

And to top it all off, American Tele-

vision and Communications Corporation (ATC) and Home Box Office (HBO) got together to provide three hours of live satellite coverage via Transponders 22 and 24 of the RCA Satcom I Satellite. The telecast had the capability of reaching 500 HBO systems in 47 states. A live panel discussion at poolside at the El Cortez drew over 50 phone calls from people in 30 states. Nick Johnson, Kathleen Nolan, Paul Denn of CVC, Sallie Fischer of NFLCP and many others participated in the telecast, which was intercut with tapes of conference highlights and access programming.

Bay Area

"This area is unique, there are more cable/access groups in a small area than anywhere else in the country."

(continued from page 5)

studio or channel of its own, but relies on documentary production for programming. Automatic three-quarter-inch editing with Sony 2850's is available to MCV members at \$5.00 per hour.

Berkeley

"The doors of access are totally closed in Berkeley," reports Gloria Belsky, former host of the *Gloria Show* on Bay Cable's access channel in Berkeley. Belsky and others formed the now defunct Public Access Consortium (PAC) to advocate access in Berkeley. Though PAC was unsuccessful in keeping access open in Berkeley ("the city council sold us out!"), PAC "broke open access in Oakland," according to Belsky. Why did PAC disappear?

"We weren't grant writing types. We were activists and we didn't go through the system," she said.

Hayward-San Leandro

Public Access Cable Television (PACT) having won a commitment from the United Cable Company's Hayward-San Leandro system (which serves San Lorenzo and Foster City as well) is making plans to consolidate two existing color studios in San Leandro, reports United access worker Larry Kay. United boasts a 35 percent penetration for the system. The fifth anniversary of the opening of the Hayward Studio will be celebrated February 15, 1979 in conjunction with an NFLCP regional conference.



TAPING IT TOGETHER

A video manual written with community group members in mind.

A new handbook, *Taping it together*, is available from Urban Planning Aid, a nonprofit agency funded by the federal government to work with low income community groups. *Taping it* focuses on the Sony 3400 and 3450 portapak, but is a gold mine of information for the aspiring community television user. Over 90 illustrations graphically depict every operation from opening the aperture to connecting the AC power supply. Notable sections include troubleshooting (decidedly for the Sony), interviews, graphics, distribution, and choosing your medium. 83 pp. \$1.25 plus 50¢ postage. Available from UPA/Media, 120 Boylston St., Rm. 527, Boston, MA 02116. *Editing at UPA* supplement (Sony 3650 to Panasonic 3160) is also available. 7 pp. 25*.

Community Education

(continued from page 11)

channel includes sports, entertainment, features on organizations, council meetings and reports, documentaries, parent and continuing education, and school activities.

Henry Linhart is the Coordinator of Tompkins Community Access, which is a nonprofit, tax-exempt group based in Ithaca, New York. This group was extremely active in having access provisions included in the local franchise. Operational funds are received from membership fees, donations, local businesses, CETA, and the cable company. The group is in its first year of production and is producing between two to five hours per week.

As you can see from the results of this survey, access is alive and thriving in the Northeast. Individual communities and groups have ascertained their resources and developed unique structures to facilitate access. Whether home base is a library, a school, or a cable operator's studio, people around the region are gaining access to the cable television medium and using it for a multitude of purposes.

***(Editor's Note:** All of the following results may not add up to a total of 46 because some questions require multiple answers, while others may not be applicable to the entire group.)

Computer Voting at N.E. Regional Meeting

by Tom DeWitt

Someday "cable access" might mean a return feed to the cable head end. Two-way interactive systems such as Warner's QUBE (tm) provide meaningful access for thousands of cable subscribers in a form quite a bit different from what NFLCP members normally think of as access programming. Two-way systems give cable a type of programming that can compete with broadcast without imitating it.

However, this new technology can cut both ways. The electronic poll can lead to democratic poll-itics or a poll-ice state ala Orwell's 1984. At the N.E. Regional Convention, NFLCP members got a glimpse of such two-way systems using a computer-based classroom at the Educational Communications Center of the University of Albany.

The Regional business meeting used the computer-based system for three functions—taking attendance, conducting a demographic survey, and running an opinion poll. The first function proved to be the most difficult, as the programmers discovered a "bug" which prevented the computer from displaying the names of attendees on the video readout. Careful examination of the data later revealed that oth-

erwise the attendance was correctly taken. The demographic survey went smoothly. The results are presented and analyzed in this issue's *Community Education* column.

The opinion poll was an experiment in survey techniques and a meaningful inquiry into the views of the assembled NFLCP members. Using a binary branch logic tree, the participants went from a single issue, "Who should regulate public access cable?" to 16 alternative solutions in five sequential votes. Not surprisingly, the 20 participating voters endorsed the FCC, progenitor of access and now under fire from the Midwest decision. However, in a series of re-evaluation votes, the group indicated a latent support for state regulatory agencies, a position which may become more prevalent after the FCC situation is resolved.

Participation in the opinion poll took eight minutes. A similar poll on a two-way cable system would also take eight minutes.

The N.E. Convention closed with a 15-0 vote to adjourn, taken electronically and displayed instantly. The liberating possibility of electronic elections!

A description of the polling technique and its results can be obtained from Tom DeWitt, 111 N. Pine Ave., Albany, NY 12203.

Regional Reports

(continued from page 12)

which the meeting took place. Thanks to DeWitt, members were able to experience the potential of interactive, computer-based video.

Robin Stahl was elected Regional Coordinator, replacing Jerry Lombardi as Interim Coordinator. Time and place of the next Regional Meeting will be announced to the membership at a later date.

Central States Region

Regional Coordinator:

Don Smith

Community Channel 7

Munroe County Public Library

303 E. Kirkland

Bloomington, IN 47401

(812) 339-2271

The Central States Region held a conference in Columbus, Ohio, on November 3 and 4. Sessions included a tour of Warner Cable's QUBE operation.

—Don R. Smith

Midwestern Region

Welcome to all the new members in the Midwest region. The region has 43 new members from the following cities: Hibbing, MN; Kansas City, KS; Des Plaines, IL; Madison, WI; St. Louis, MO; Urbana, IL; Rockford, IL; Minneapolis, MN; Champaign, IL; Freeport, IL; Beloit, WI; Bellevue, IA; Iowa City, IA; McFarland, WI; Monona, WI; Muscatine, IA; Kewau-nee, WI; St. Paul, MN; Calendar, WI; Sinsinawa, WI; Cudaly, WI; Portage, WI; Moorhead, MN; Waupaca, WI.

The Winter Midwest Regional meeting was held in Rockford, Illinois in November. A new regional coordinator was selected. More on that meeting in the next issue of the newsletter.

The Midwest region welcomes Sallie Fischer, the new general manager at University Community Video (UCV) in Minneapolis and Kathy Seltzer, new equipment manager at UCV. Welcome.

New Indies Network Over CATV

On November 22, the Cambridge Independent Network began distribution of films and videotapes by independent Cambridge moviemakers to nine cable TV systems across the country. The first series consists of eight weeks of hour-long shows. Each participating cable programmer receives a three-quarter-inch video-cassette every week, cablecasts the show and sends it on to the next stop in the network. The following cable organizations are participating:

Warner Cable, Boston region,
Massachusetts
Berks TV Cable, Reading,
Pennsylvania
Ann Arbor Cablevision, Michigan
Community Access TV, Dubuque,
Iowa
Grass Roots, Aspen, Colorado
Viacom Cablevision, San Francisco,
California
Community Video Center, San
Diego, California
Austin Community TV, Texas

Durham Cablevision, North
Carolina

The stated aim of the MIT-based Cambridge Independent Network is to develop alternative distribution of films and videotapes by independent producers. The first series is drawn from the work of the MIT Film/Video Section. The documentaries are in the "cinema verite" style and range from classics in the genre by Richard Leacock and Edward Pincus to more contemporary, personal movies. The second series, now being planned, will feature works by moviemakers throughout the New England area.

The Cambridge Independent Network is seeking cable TV programmers who are interested in participating in the network. For more information, contact:

Cambridge Independent Network
MIT Bldg. E21-010
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 253-1606

Legal Briefs

(continued from page 15)

While we do not have the expertise to second guess the Supreme Court in their ruling, we are encouraged by the actions of the FCC and the Justice Department in the proceedings. Further, the questions of jurisdiction could be settled by Congress including explicit authority to the FCC in the rewrite of the Communications Act.

End Part I (to be continued next issue)

HEW Awards NYU Grant

How can telecommunications be used to enhance the provision of services to the developmentally disabled? Can those who serve the developmentally disabled adapt the technology to suit their needs? An innovative project has been designed by the Alternate Media Center (AMC), New York University, School of the Arts in collaboration with The Institute for the Future, The Roosevelt Hospital, Pediatric Service, and the American Association of University Affiliated Programs, to provide realistic answers to these questions.

Dean David Oppenheim announced today that the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) has awarded a \$1,499,815 grant to the Alternate Media Center (AMC) at the School of the Arts to assess the communication needs in the developmental disabilities field and to implement a set of demonstration projects which show

how telecommunications can be used to meet these needs. At the conclusion of the project, which will begin immediately, a thorough evaluation of the demonstration projects will be conducted. The results of the evaluation will be widely disseminated.

People who suffer from developmental disabilities (which include autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and mental retardation) require a wide range of generic and special services over an extended period, often for life. These services must be provided by a variety of specialists, by teachers, and at home—whether "home" be with the family, a community home, or an institution.

Telecommunications systems, which range from two-way television to a variety of new services using telephone lines, may be of value in this area. They can be used to improve: access to care; the training of those who provide it; ways in which providers work together as a "system" (especially when

such a "system" extends the use of scarce resources); collaboration in research; and responsiveness on the part of the wider community.

The purpose of the project is to develop effective and affordable uses of telecommunication systems for the ultimate benefit of developmentally disabled children and adults. An important goal is to enable those working in this field to enhance their self-sufficiency in the use of communications technology. Therefore, processes will be created and nurtured whereby those organizations providing services to the developmentally disabled will themselves learn whether and how to match telecommunication services to communication needs.

The major goal of the project team is to select and implement telecommunication projects which will truly serve clients and to imbed these applications deeply in the organizational and economic fabric of the developmental disabilities field.

One of a kind

The Daily
Inter Lake

By MARY PICKETT

Inter Lake Staff Writer

There's nobody quite like Billy Soul.

With his graying hair braided into a queue falling down the back of his blue denim jumpsuit, a silver loop piercing his left ear lobe and his credo of challenging both the Left and the Right, Soul isn't a run-of-the-mill 58-year-old.

Which may be reason enough to watch Soul's weekly color television series, "The Soul Survivor Show," beginning Wednesday at 6 p.m. on Cable Channel 13. The show is being aired under a Federal Communication Commission mandate that a portion of cable television time be opened up for public use.

Soul's first night offerings will be highlights of the Montana Trade Fair held in Missoula: Ruth White, Bigfork weaver; and a segment entitled "Offensive on Two Counts," critical comments by Diane Pete and Ernest Gwindon about a painting of a nude Indian woman which used to hang at the Outlaw Inn.

During future programs, Soul will present footage on Logger Days, Hot Springs Homesteader Days and alternative energy sources.

Soul became an independent video

producer a year and one-half ago when he quit his "bag" as a jazz and rock and roll musician and invested in portable, three-quarter inch video equipment.

"I did a cold turkey on music and haven't touched an instrument since, except to stir the fire with my drum stick," Soul says.

Soul has a special interest in the women's movement because, he says, 'it's the only revolution in town.'



And Soul Video, as Soul calls his one-man company, has been rolling ever since.

To learn how to use the new gadgets, Soul enrolled in a video production seminar at Flathead Valley Community College, which turned out to be enlightening for both parties.

"They'd never seen equipment like mine and I'd never seen equipment like theirs," he says.

Armed with what he's learned at FVCC and on his own, Soul went solo to start work

on "What Women Want," taped interviews with women about what they want from life, their jobs and men.

Soul has a special interest in the women's movement because he says "It's the only revolution in town." At least one part of each of Soul's cable series will feature women, from women shopkeepers and singers to women strip-tease artists.

Even though Soul's stint in the video professional has been brief, he's already caught the eye of The National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. Soul's production of "Ryder's Colors," a study of discrimination against the jackets of motorcyclists, was chosen this summer as one of the eight productions to go on the group's tour of cable stations across the country.

The production also was shown during a national conference on public access cable television in August at San Diego, Calif.

Soul's next project will be the taping of an Indian treaty conference in Butte later this month, he says.

Soul (Bill Ward) moved to the Flathead Valley 24 years ago from California to join the "back-to-the-land" movement before it had a name. He and his wife Halcyon, a weaver, live in Lakeside.

Uplink/Downlink

(continued from page 7)

Satellite Fed Superstations: Due to recent FCC actions, cable systems around the country will now be able to fill their channels by importing as many distant signals as their plants can accommodate. This is expected to encourage the development of independent television "superstations" which utilize satellite transmission to expand the number of cable markets well beyond the traditional areas in which the stations are viewed.

WTCG (TV) Atlanta was the first "superstation" going out to cable systems via SATCOM and Southern Satellite beginning in December 1976, almost two years ahead of other broadcasters.

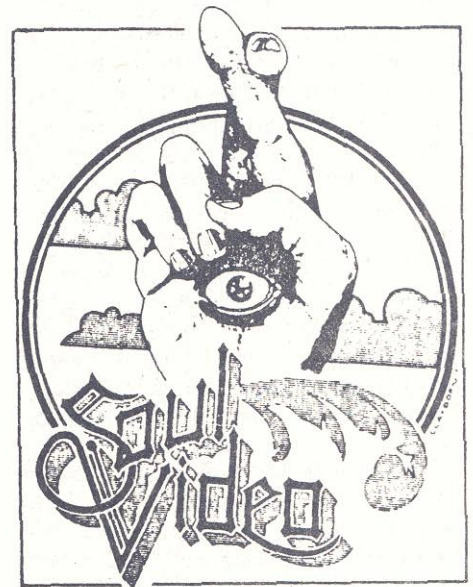
Electronic Mail by 1982: The Postal Service announced in November, that it was beginning to test transmission of mail by electronic impulses and satel-

lites. The service would convert messages to electronic impulses and send them almost instantaneously. Once they reached their destination, the messages would be reconverted to printed form and delivered with the next day's mail.

A recently completed study by RCA found that with the volume to support it, a first class letter could be sent for 10 to 11 cents. However, before major development of such a system, Congress and the White House must make a decision on whether the postal service should make substantial expenditures to offer electronic mail service to the public.

Your Chance to Uplink

Remember, you are the UPLINK, so if you have any information you would like included in this column, contact me: Paige Amidon, 147 West 87th Street, New York, NY 10024.



Public Ownership

(continued from page 6)

the height of godlessness, the city of Vienna and the *nation*—the entire nation—of Denmark are planning for comprehensive public cable systems.

Using "minibonds" and other innovative financing tools, cities could make cable truly the property of the people. And it would be a lucrative property. First, because total saturation of the community would become the reality, not some distant dream. Cable service could be *volume-priced*—discounted, almost, with low prices selling service rather than an expensive marketing organization. The City of San Bruno, proprietor of the largest public cable system in operation today, makes minimal investments in marketing yet enjoys a perennial operating surplus, offers low rates (the lowest in California), and has achieved a nearly 60 percent penetration rate in just a matter of a few years.

Individual investors would not be the only beneficiaries of efficient cable operations. In the future, cities with functioning broadband communication systems will be in a much better negotiating position for dealing with intercity communication vendors—Bell, IBM, RCA, and so forth—than cities which have allowed their communication plans to drift on the tide. The City of Los Angeles is a case in point. In 1976 the public ownership question was debated. Before L.A. finally capitulated to Bell System lobbying against public cable, participants in the planning process were pleasantly surprised to hear MCI—a growing and successful specialized common carrier, in direct competition with Bell—testify that a completely-cabled L.A. would make it attractive for MCI to expand services to the general populace. At the least, citizens could enjoy reduced long-distance phone rates, connecting with MCI's long-distance network through the local public loop.

At some future time it might become possible for cities, through joint-powers agreements, to construct intrastate and interstate facilities joining their public local loops and negating entirely the need to deal with monopoly vendors. Even if cities just constructed local loops, however, the boost to local commerce and public services could be immense. For exam-

ple, a preliminary NTIA study has shown that investments in communication infrastructure (in rural areas) produce *18 times* the economic return as would equal investments in transportation infrastructure. If cities build and maintain roads to better local commerce and improve the mobility of citizens in their daily pursuits, why not have cities build even more productive communication networks toward the same ends?

This brings me to my last reason for advocating public ownership of cable, a reason at once highly ideological and logical. If citizens are responsible for the financing and running of the local cable system—to the point of deciding which out-of-city bank is going to get to use which channel in which community for electronic banking, and at what price—then, historically, they are likely to grow to fit the demands placed upon them. Charles Hampden-Turner, the social critic and community activist, calls this *the theory of psychosocial development*. That might be a bit jargonistic, but the point is that when you challenge someone to do a job, and then give him or her the implements to do it, the job will get done and the person will get smarter and may even define the next job to get done.

The problem with cable is that it's always a matter of "letting Harry do it." The cable operators, knowing how shaky their position really is, have been content to let the public think of cable

as nothing more than another luxury item, an occasional necessity, but hardly worth bothering the public consciousness about. Of course, now with the creeping doom of telephone dominance in the guise of the Communications Act "rewrite," the cable industry wants to recruit public-access people and consumers as its allies. Too late, say I. There are better ways to go now, and public ownership is one of them.

One goal I advocate is that which communication philosopher Gene Youngblood calls a "media inversion"—people defining for themselves appropriate communication structures and environments. No one says this goal will be an easy one to achieve. As the cable industry points out, city governments are potentially as devious as the cable industry itself. But government is one step closer to the people than business, in my books. Local government is that much closer than a New York-based conglomerate feeding me the same television and filmic tripe I can get just as well without cable.

If I had a vote to cast for the kind of communications medium I wanted, then I would cast *my* vote for publicly-owned cable television.

Robert Jacobson is president of the Institute for Communication Policy Development in Los Angeles, and author of Municipal Control of Cable Communications (Praeger: 1977).

Calendar

March 25-28—National Association of Broadcasters annual convention. Dallas. Future conventions: New Orleans, March 30-April 2, 1980; Las Vegas, April 12-15, 1981; Dallas, April 4-7, 1982; Las Vegas, April 10-13, 1983; Atlanta, March 18-21, 1984; Las Vegas, April 7-10, 1985; Kansas City, Missouri, April 13-16, 1986; Atlanta, April 5-8, 1987.

Ninth Annual Film Festival on the Exceptional Individual—April 10. The University of Southern California, University Affiliated Program at Childrens Hospital of Los Angeles and the Southern California Region II of the American Association on Mental Deficiency are sponsoring this film festival which will include outstanding professional, independent and commercial films and video tapes that were produced during the past year, portraying handicapped children and adults. Application

information: Mr. Neil Goldstein, Director of Training in Instructional Technology, University Affiliated Program, Childrens Hospital of Los Angeles, Box 54700 Terminal Annex, Los Angeles, CA 90054.

May 20-23—National Cable Television Association annual convention. Las Vegas. Future conventions: Dallas, April 13-16, 1980; 1981 site to be selected; Washington, May 25-28, 1982.

May 28-June 2 The Educational Film Library Association's 21st annual American Film Festival at the Americana Hotel in New York City.

November 11-15—National Association of Educational Broadcasters 55th annual convention. Conrad Hilton, Chicago.

Info Matchup

Bulletin

Northeast Conference Tapes Currently available are audio tapes made at the Fall Northeast Conference. Taped topics include an introduction to cable, local franchising, educational access, access and labor unions, the future of access as seen by the users and industry, funding, municipal access, tape networks, legal liabilities for cable users, satellites, audio services on cable, and public broadcasting access. Write to NFLCP Tape Library, South Hadley Public Library, Bardwell St., South Hadley, MA 01075. Special duplication rates for NFLCP members.

NFLCP Tape Library is seeking videotapes to review for inclusion in the first national tape exchange catalog. Members are invited to submit works for technical and content review. If accepted, tapes submitted would be kept permanently by the Library and be used to make dubs. Write to NFLCP Library, South Hadley Public Library, Bardwell St., South Hadley, MA 01075 for more information on submission, review, production standards, and royalty schedule. A catalog of accepted tapes will be ready by Spring 1979.

Southern Educational Communications Network (SECA) is acquiring ¾-inch videotapes and films for broadcast on their public TV network. Deadline for submission is December 15, 1978. Contact Malcolm Wall, Network Programming, SECA, P.O. Box 5966, Columbia, SC 29250, (803) 799-5517.

National Cable TV Association is compiling a list of training and information tapes and films related to cable TV. For further information write David G. Reiser, Assistant Director of Engineering, NCTA, 918 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, (202) 457-6774.

Texas Festival Students and independents are encouraged to submit videotaped and filmed documentaries, narratives, and experimental works to the Austin Film & Video Society for their spring 1979 festival. Call Jim Elliott at (512) 471-4071.

If you write for information to anyone on this page, please mention that you found out about them through *NFLCP Newsletter*.

Pay dues promptly if you receive a notice that your yearly NFLCP membership is due to expire shortly.

Have a Festival Participate in the NFLCP Bicycle Tour of the winners of the "Home-town USA" Video Festival by sponsoring a showing of 5½ hours of prize-winning tapes in your community. Tapes from Tennessee, Minnesota, Montana, Oregon, and New York will be shown for an \$80.00 sponsoring fee. Contact Larry Staab, Festival Coordinator, 456 S. Atlantic Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15224.

Unemployment Forum in Your Town? The unemployment situation in Connecticut is examined in a series of videotapes recently produced by Jan Stackhouse and Jerry Lombardi. These tapes are available for rental to programmers planning to have call-ins or closed-circuit shows on this topic. Contact Jan or Jerry at 390 New Haven Ave., Derby, CT 06418, (203) 735-7075.

Distributor Seeks Films Projections Inc., a distributor of films for positive change, is seeking films and slideshows which offer a creative vision of the future. We're especially interested in films about: resources, people, communities and systems. Film and slideshow makers desiring to submit work should first write describing the project to: Bernt Petterssen, Projections Inc., Brook Road, Warren, VT 05674.

The Second Annual NFLCP National Convention will be held in Austin, Texas in late June-early July (date to be confirmed later). Workshop recommendations should be sent immediately to Sallie Fischer; UCV; Studio A, Rarig Center, Univ. of Minn., 330 21st Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55455. Please include title, description, addresses, phone numbers, and names of participants.

Phyllis Joffe is compiling a list of **videotapes on anti-nuclear and alternative energy issues**, to be circulated to groups requesting information in these areas. If you have tapes that you would like included on this list, send the following information to Phyllis Joffe, Box 1008, Amherst, MA 01002: name of tape, description, producer, address, phone, rental/purchase price, available format, color/b&w, length.

Video Distribution The Urban Planning Aid Media Group is soliciting videotapes about City Issue/housing, Sexism/women's issues, and Institutions and Violence, e.g., prisons, schools, hospitals. Looking for materials of interest to an eastern Massachusetts audience as part of a Distribution Resources Project. Will exchange tapes from our library. We provide a variety of media resources to low-income groups. Contact Faye Moore, UPA, 120 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116.

Publications

No more television? Jerry Mander's new book, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*, is a must for everyone involved with the medium. It's published by William Morrow in paperback, \$4.95.

Copyright Primer The Northwest Media Project, Box 4093, Portland, OR 97208, (503) 223-5335, has published a booklet called the "Copyright Primer for Film and Video." Written by Joseph Sparkman, a member of Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, the booklet describes the applications of the new U.S. copyright law to moving pictures and other audiovisual work, and is useful to artists and producers in all parts of the country.

Municipal Assistance is available from the New York State Commission on Cable TV in a publication called *Cable Television Franchising Workbook*. It includes community ascertainment on local programming, as well as information on creation of cable advisory boards. Other recent publications include *Technical Requirements for Cable TV Systems* and their *Local Programming Packet*. Write to the Commission at Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223, (518) 474-4992.

The Portable Video Handbook covers the operation of half-inch portable videotape recorders and half-inch editing systems, as well as information on three-quarter inch and color video. It provides the beginner with the basic background necessary for planning and producing video programs. Available for \$3.60 (shipping included) from University Community Video, Studio A, Rarig Center, University of Minn., 330 21st Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455. Make check or money order payable to UCV.

Copyright Law An excellent guide to the new U.S. Copyright Law is available from N.W. Media Project, P.O. Box 4093, Portland, OR 97208. You can also obtain copies of Public Law 94-553 as well as a 26-page booklet "Reproduction of Copyrighted Works by Educators and Librarians—Circular R21" from Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559.

Funding

Alabama Folk Art Grants \$3,000 each for short documentaries. Send resume, availability/advance notice required and equipment contrib. Contact: Alabama Filmmakers Coop, 4333 Chickasaw Dr., Huntsville, AL 35801.

NFLCP
Box 832
Dubuque, IA 52001

BULK RATE
U.S. Postage Paid
STAND, Inc.
Permit 16
Derby, CT 06418

Ask a Friend to Join the NFLCP

Individual membership is \$15 annually. This entitles a member to one newsletter subscription, admission to national and regional conferences at cost, and a reduced rate on all NFLCP informational services.

Organizations and access centers can be members for \$50 annually. This fee includes two newsletter subscriptions, two conference admissions at cost, and all informational services free of charge. It enables your organization to establish relations through the NFLCP to the FCC and other Washington commissions.

Sponsoring members will pay a minimum of \$100, and any sponsor will receive all benefits mentioned above. In essence, **membership entitles your voice to be heard.**

Subscribe to the NFLCP Newsletter

You may subscribe to the *Newsletter* without becoming a member. Individual subscriptions are \$7.50 annually, and organizations will receive the publication for \$15.

TEAR OUT AND RETURN THIS FORM

.....

Membership (includes newsletter)

Circle one:

Individual \$15 Organization \$50 Sponsor \$100

Subscriber (newsletter only)

Circle one:

Individual \$7.50 Organization \$15

Check payable to:

National Federation of Local Cable Programmers or NFLCP

Send to: **NFLCP**

c/o Sue Buske
763 1/2 Chestnut St.
Dubuque, IA 52001

NOTIFY NATIONAL OFFICE
of change of address

Name: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Who Are You?

educator: high school _____ vocational _____ university _____ student _____ public interest organization _____ access organization _____ independent
producer _____ library _____ church _____ press _____ government _____ industry _____ other _____

Join Today!